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Subject: PSIO SITREP UPDATE #14 – 11 Feb 2022 – Freedom Convoy Solidarity Activity

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ONLY: SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS SITUATION DEVELOPS. INFORMATION MAY BE BASED ON UNCONFIRMED REPORTING.

UPDATE #14

DATE/TIME: February 11, 2022 @ 12:15 hrs

PURPOSE: To provide aggregated situational awareness regarding "Freedom Convoy" solidarity activity impacting Alberta.

BACKGROUND: No change.

CURRENT STATUS:

Coutts Border Crossing

- As of 09:00 hrs Fri Feb, RCMP and Sheriff Highway Patrol (SHP) report:
 - Border traffic remains blocked.
 - CBSA has closed COUTTS CROSSING to vehicle traffic. Pedestrian traffic is still permitted to cross.
 - Farm tractors at the COUTTS SITE have escalated by moving into the ditches effectively blocking all traffic movement.
 - Information suggests blockade participants have taken up second residence in COUTTS.
 - DEL BONITA hours will be extended to 09:00-22:00hrs today.
 - Have seen an increase in traffic of over 900%. On 10 Feb they processed 163 Commercial and 173 Passenger (7 vehicles on same day 2021).
 - Still awaiting decision on whether to extend hours and open on weekends at DEL BONITA crossing.
 - SHP now in discussion with RCMP to continue with providing manpower to DEL BONITA & CARWAY in addition to members committed at CHECK-POINT 10.

- Highway Patrol monitoring for accumulative convoy activity moving towards COUTTS today from NISKU and south.
- Information continues to suggest 1000 horses prepared to ride into Check-Point 10 on Sat 12 Feb.
- Reports of a substantial online call (1000+ and growing) to protest on the US side.
- Some public & officer safety concerns have been identified [*JSG aware - specific law enforcement information will not be shared here due to operational security considerations*]
- As of 17:00 hrs Thur 10 Feb, RCMP and Sheriff Highway Patrol (SHP) report:
 - Blockade participants indicated they would no longer allow cattle trucks through.
- Social media posts continue to advocate for protesters to join the blockade at COUTTS. An influencer has called for equipment to move tractors from the Edmonton and Red Deer areas to COUTTS.
- Social media indicates continued organizing for two accumulative convoys to MILK RIVER on Fri 11 Feb and Saturday 12 Feb. Marshalling areas are indicated as NISKU (13:30), WETASKIWIN PEAVEY MART (14:30), PENHOLD PETRO CANADA (15:55), OLDS CO-OP CARDLOCK (16:45), CALGARY IFLY (17:40). Convoy organizers have stated they are keeping the convoy route secret to prevent police from finding it.

Alberta Legislature / McDougall Centre

- Social media activity indicates plans for convoys from LEDUC/NISKU, SHERWOOD PARK and ACHESON to the LEGISLATURE on 11 Feb. [unknown if this has materialized]
- Social media indicates continued organizing for Edmonton area convoys to the LEGISLATURE at 10:30 hrs on Sat 12 Feb. Marshalling areas are indicated as ACHESON HUSKY, SHERWOOD PARK FLYING J, NISKU BLACK JACKS/FLYING J, ALDERSYDE PETRO CANADA, PONOKA and WETASKIWIN.

City of Edmonton & Environs

- The City of Edmonton is activating their EOC for Feb 12 in response to planned protest events, and has requested support from AEMA POC.
 - POC is elevating to Level II (approximately 1000-1800 hours). JSG is lead Ministry and will work with City of Edmonton to provide reporting.

City of Calgary & Environs

- Social media posts indicated an intent shut down one lane of northbound QEII at Highway 566 (Balzac) at 18:00 hrs Thu 10 Feb. [Did not occur].
- CPS assesses, with low confidence, that the rally scheduled for 12 Feb will draw substantial attendance (1-10k persons).

Regional Municipalities / Rural

- A slow-roll convoy is planned for BONNYVILLE, BOYLE, PLAMONDON, COLD LAKE, LLOYDMINSTER, VERMILLION, ELK RIVER, WASKATENAU, SMOKY LAKE and VILNA for 12 Feb.
- A horseback "Freedom Ride" is planned for TURNER VALLEY for 12 Feb.
- A horseback "Ride For Freedom" is planned for RIMBEY for 12 Feb.

Ottawa "Freedom Convoy 2022"

- Protesters in Ottawa have been able to entrench themselves, despite enforcement actions by Ottawa Police and the temporary loss of funding. Protesters in the city have established another encampment at a secondary location in the city.
- Protesters in Ottawa have suggested a blockade of the Ottawa International Airport.
- Groups from across Canada have also organized supply and reinforcement convoys to help keep the Ottawa occupation running. Small convoys, mostly comprised of personal vehicles, have been dispatched to Ottawa carrying fuel, food, fresh clothing, and other essential supplies for the protesters who are on site.
- The second platform used to fund Freedom Convoys (GiveSendGo) has been blocked by an Ontario court. Freedom Convoy supporters appear to be working on alternate ways to raise money (ie, crypto).
- Supporters in Toronto have allegedly organized three buses that will transport protesters to Ottawa for the weekend of 11-13 Feb.

Other Provinces / National

- Ontario has declared a state of emergency aimed at protecting international border crossings, 400-series highways, airports, ports, bridges and railways, as well as the safe movement of medical services, public transit, municipal and provincial roadways and pedestrian walkways. The initial state of emergency declaration will last for 42 hours. An application is also set to be heard by the Ontario Superior Court for an injunction that would prevent protesters from blocking the Ambassador Bridge.
- Canada-US border crossings have become the primary target for convoy blockades. Truckers have disrupted traffic at several busy border crossings in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario. These blockades have started to strain supply chains and have been attributed to the temporary closures of manufacturing factories as critical component supplies become scarce.
- On Sat 12 Feb, protesters intend to hold another convoy to Queen's Park in Toronto. Organizers have stated that this protest will attempt to occupy the park near the Ontario legislature building in a similar fashion as the Ottawa protests. The group has asked some participants to go directly to the park instead of participating in the convoy in order to establish a presence at Queen's Park ahead of the vehicles arriving. The change in tactic was in response to Toronto Police shutting down roads for during the first protest in an attempt to prevent a large scale vehicle protest at the park.

International

- Social media posts have called for a "solidarity protest" to be held in Montana near the SWEETGRASS/COUTTS border crossing at I-15 mile marker 393 from 14:00 hrs 11 Feb to 17:00 hrs 13 Feb 2022. Comments about the event do not indicate an intent to blockade the highway in Montana, but appear to be building a party atmosphere to express support for the Canadian blockade participants. [Apparent uptake for this event is limited – only 11 have responded as 'going'; however, apparent involvement of an Alberta-based organizer indicates an adaptive effort to capitalize of US political and media attention with a view to influencing strategic support from affinity networks within MT. The potential for interference with Interstate-15 commercial traffic flows presents significant economic concerns for both Alberta and Montana, given heavy reliance on the CANAMEX trade corridor.]

- Media reports indicate that the White House and senior US officials are now “seized” with the blockade at the AMBASSADOR BRIDGE. On 10 February 2021, the US Secretaries of Homeland Security and Transportation reportedly spoke to their Canadian counterparts, urged them to use federal powers to resolve the issues and offered the full support of their departments. Separate media reporting notes that White House Economic Advisor Brian DEESE stated in a media interview that the BIDEN Administration is also working in “real time” to divert cargo by rail, bridge or water. MICHIGAN Governor Gretchen WILLMER also urged authorities to intervene, noting that it is having economic effects on the northern US state.
- Media reports indicate that despite an order not to enter PARIS, motorists inspired by the “Freedom Convoy” are converging on the French capital. The French government is planning to deploy thousands of police officers in and around PARIS and at checkpoints and toll stations on major roads in order to keep the protestors out. While the protestors in France are inspired by events in Canada, the movement appears to be uniting a wider group of disparate interests, including remnants of the anti-government “gilets jaunes” and the French far-right.

MINISTRY UPDATES:

Justice & Solicitor General (JSG):

- Tow truck operators in ALBERTA, BRITISH COLUMBIA and MONTANA have declined to provide service to remove vehicles at COUTTS.
- RCMP has secured a few tow trucks (small units) and are currently staged at LPS in Lethbridge. Still working out logistics to obtaining large units.
- JSG assisting with sourcing of equipment such as heavy wreckers, flat deck tow trucks, light tow trucks, and trailer/tow units.

Transportation (TRANS):

- CARWAY. Department is confirming with CBSA and US CBP that ports at CARWAY/PIEGAN MT will maintain their normal hours of operation (08:00-1800) today (11 Feb). Sheriffs continue to ensure a checkpoint north of CARWAY is active while the port is open.
- DEL BONITA. Department is confirming with CBSA and US CBP ports at DEL BONITA that they will remain open until 22:00 hrs local time today (11 Feb), and if they are willing to remain open weekend. Sheriffs continue to ensure a checkpoint north of DEL BONITA is active while the port is open.
- CBSA is working with US CBP to allow cattle through DEL BONITA/PIEGAN and then re-route back to SWEETGRASS. The department is seeking confirmation.
- Border Crossings Traffic on Thu 10 Feb:
 - COUTTS: **SB 0** (no change); **NB 0** (no change)
 - CARWAY: **SB 140** (+15 from Wed); **NB 120** (+25 from Wed)
 - DE BONITA: **SB 305** (-30 from Wed); **NB 370** (+85 from Wed)

Municipal Affairs:

- COVID-19 Current State: 1,586 hospitalized (-29); 126 in ICU (-9); 25,339 active cases (-1,557); testing positivity 29.3% (-2.4%).

Jobs, Economy, and Innovation (JEI):

- No change.

Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development (AFRED):

- No change.

ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS:

- The ongoing freedom convoy protest in Ottawa continues to be the primary focus of Canadian activist activity and has been the inspiration behind additional solidarity campaigns across Canada and in the US and Europe.
- Freedom convoy groups have announced the expansion of their campaign to include other critical transportation corridors.
 - Protesters in Ottawa have suggested a blockade of the Ottawa Airport.
 - Solidarity groups in the Maritime Provinces allegedly associated with the commercial fishing industry have called for a blockade of ports on the East and West coasts of Canada. On 12 February, a cohort of groups will attempt to block shipping lanes and 'ports-of-call' using personal, recreational, and commercial ships. Organizers have asked for the larger commercial fishing boats to have "mooring priority" and for the smaller vessels to provide support.
- Self-described 'Anti-fascist' groups and local community members have started to host counter-protest actions against convoy protesters. The counter-protests have had little impact on the freedom convoy, however attempts to oppose the convoy have increased in frequency. On social media, counter-protest groups have shared pictures and videos of acts of vandalism against the trucks and other vehicles.

FORECAST:

- 'Freedom convoy' solidarity will likely remain the focus of Canadian activism for the foreseeable future.
- As the occupation draws on, the counter-protest movement could see a surge in support, especially from local community members who have voiced their displeasure over protest/blockade activities.

PREPARED BY: Intelligence Bureau, Provincial Security & Intelligence Office (PSIO)

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